

What Is Reconciliation?

A Path to Healing

“Reconciliation.” It’s a big word, but what does it mean? It is when people work to repair a relationship. It is an ongoing process. In this case, it is repairing the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians. It has been unequal for a long, long time.

In 2008, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a formal apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools on behalf of the Canadian government. That same year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was set up. Their job was to go across the country to interview people who had attended residential school to get their stories and statements. This was stressful for many students because they didn’t want to remember those hard times, but it was also healing for some Survivors.

The TRC completed its report in 2015. It came up with 94 Calls to Action—ways that Canadians can move forward. There is a lot of healing and work still to be done, but the TRC report is a good start for finding a way to honour the past, while looking towards a bright future for all Canadians.

“It took 125 years to create the problem—seven generations—so it may take generations to fix.”

—Senator Murray Sinclair,
former Chair of the TRC



▲ Cree Elder Lorna Standingready (left) shared the story of what happened to her as a little girl in residential school. Here, she attends the closing ceremony of the TRC on June 3, 2015.

People have lots of ideas from **learning** to **caring** to **acting**.



“I expect folks to understand that reconciliation is a two-way street. And that we can’t get to reconciliation until we have the truth part.”

—Rebecca Benson,
Egale Canada Human Rights Trust



“We all go to school and we each have the power to decide how we will use our learning for good. As a young person, your voice is powerful. How will you use your voice to make your community more fair and respectful?”

—Charlene Bearhead,
Pathways to Education Canada Indigenous
Education Advisory Circle Member



“We know we made mistakes in the past, but now it is time to right our wrongs. Time to learn from them and teach the next generation this important history. No matter our race or background, we stand together, all of us as one, and we are united as a country because we are all different, but we are all Canadian.”

—Nevaeh Murray,
Grade 6, Charlottetown, PEI



“Reconciliation means... you have to recognize and listen to the survivors of events and hear their stories. You need to spread awareness and make sure that everyone knows about it. Then you need to fix the problem and make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

—11-year-old Zachary Mullin,
2014

Think About It!

How do you reconcile with your friends and family when you break a promise?